

body and its brief his-

difficult to discover. and it never lost that, in reality it was an equal basis. But that live and democratic see. They stood for . The Tory section a certain amount of equal standing and as designs. Few of the the League in any and allowed the , like Allan, Morris eague, subsequently s. The democratic sympathy whatever They desired the tical party in sym- two wings of the uence for the one was indecisive; it e League.

able leaders to d the other execu- uence in the colony ; they were inex- a minor part in e a commanding ervices which are hm A. Macdonald failed to take the lity and political

popular enthusi- uence, the scheme eague chiefly de- public were not tional proposal. significance and ary efforts had ecolonial union. scheme without ter of the sug- ted as a politi- tive statesman-

ship. In truth, it must be confessed that the plan of a federal union was probably due as much to the desire to forestall the anticipated action of the provincial government along similar lines, as to a conviction on the part of the convention as to its merits as a truly national policy. The convention was under the immediate necessity of formulating an alternative policy to the popular demand for reciprocity or annexation.

There was at the time a rumor to the effect that the British government was about to propose a plan of union. Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the colonies, was a well known federationist. The previous year he had brought forth the suggestion of a general assembly for the Australian colonies and it was generally believed in official circles that he favored some similar arrangement for the North American provinces. The action of the provincial government in sending two of the ministers to the Maritime provinces to negotiate a reciprocal trade agreement seemed to confirm the belief that a federal union was on the tapis. Several of the papers of the Maritime provinces lent credence to the report that the question of federation had been officially discussed by the representatives of the several governments, though with what result was not yet known to the public. These rumors were not without influence upon the members of the convention in predisposing them to accept the policy of federation. They hoped to dish their political opponents by a previous declaration in favor of a federal union. But the shrewd plans of the League miscarried owing to the apathy of the Canadian public and the suspicion of the people of the Maritime provinces who would have nothing to do with the project. The proposal to hold an inter-colonial conference was treated with indifference in every quarter and in a few months time the whole scheme of federation was practically forgotten, though Messrs. Perry and Sherwood attempted to revive it somewhat later.

The policy of colonial protection did not prove as attractive as had been anticipated. In some of the larger commercial centres it was received with considerable favor but in the rural districts it was generally regarded with suspicion. The farmers of the province were much more interested in the efforts of the government to secure an immediate market for their products in the United States than in the promise held out by the League of the future development of a home market by means of a protective policy. Moreover, the recent adoption by Great Britain of the principle of free trade had shaken the confidence of many of the colonists in the efficiency of a policy of protection.

The remainder of the platform of the League contained nothing new or distinctive in character. Some of the more important proposals were stolen from their political opponents. The questions of retrenchment and elective institutions were the peculiar tenets of the Clear Grit party and for some time past had occupied a prominent place in its campaign against the extravagance and conservatism of the Government. Notwithstanding its liberal tendencies, the League could scarcely pose as a democratic organization; at least it could not hope to compete with the radical Reformers in an appeal for democratic measures.